

REMARKS***Pending claims***

Claims 1, 3, 6-9, and 11-13 have been amended to more clearly point out and distinctly claim the invention. Claim 5 has been canceled through this Amendment. These amendments do not contain new matter and are fully supported by the specification. After these amendments are entered, fourteen (14) Claims (claims 1 and 4-17) are pending.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 112

Claims 3, 5-8 and 13 were rejected under the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The rejection over these claims has been overcome by the amendments of these claims.

Rejections Under 35 USC 102(b)

Claims 1-5 and 8-14 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by PCT Publication WO 99/26087. Claim 5 has been canceled through this Amendment and therefore the rejection over this is moot in view of this Amendment. The rejection over claims 1-4 and 8-14 is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

First, the cited reference does not disclose nor suggest anything about that a further polymer which is devoid of crosslinkable groups and forms a clear aqueous solution. Applicants respectfully disagree with the examiner that most polymers in solution are generally colorless unless dyed. In fact, only two polymers which are compatible with each other can form a clear solution. A clear solution is a solution substantially free of **turbidity (i.e., cloudless solution)**. Without compatibility with each other, two polymers form a cloudy solution (having a noticeable turbidity). Furthermore, Although the cited reference is dealing with how to making a very light visibility tinting of PVA contact lens wherein a water-soluble PVA prepolymer is crosslinked in the presence of a low amount of a pigment dispersion, the cited reference specifies that the upper limit of pigment present in the polymerization mixture is 0.05% by weight (the paragraph bridging pages 11 and 12). The polymerization mixture may contain a similar low amount of a physiologically acceptable non-polymerizable polymer as dispersing agent (page 12, the 4th paragraph). The only working example in the cited reference, Example 5, discloses a prepolymerization mixture comprising 39.6 ppm of pigment and about 60 ppm of a non-crosslinkable PVA (Moviol 3-83). This is way below limit of 0.1% by weight of non-crosslinkable polymer present in the composition of the claimed invention.

Second, the cited reference does disclose nor suggest anything about a further compatible polymer present in an amount sufficient to reduce mold opening forces required for opening a closed mold in which a molding is to be produced from the aqueous solution. The cited reference is concerned with dispersing a small amount of non-soluble pigment in an aqueous polymerizable

mixture using certain non-crosslinkable polymers. However, there is not the slightest hint or suggestion towards a mold opening force reduction effect of said polymers. In fact, the small amounts of polymer employed or suggested in the cited reference can not have said mold opening force reduction effect. In contrast, the present invention is concerned with reduction of mold opening force. Table 2 on page 21 in the specification shows that the mold opening forces decrease substantially upon the addition of 0.1% or more by weight of a non-crosslinkable polymer.

Therefore, Applicants submit that the claimed invention as currently claimed is not anticipated by PCT 99/26087, since the cited reference does not include every elements of the present invention as currently claimed. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection.

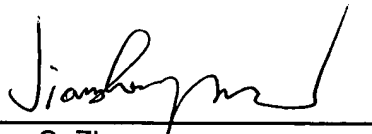
Rejections Under 35 USC 103(a)

Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over PCT Publication WO 99/26087. The rejection over claims 6 and 10 is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

As discussed above, the cited reference does not disclose not suggest anything a further compatible polymer in an amount sufficient to reduce mold opening forces required for opening a closed mold in which a molding is to be produced from the aqueous solution, wherein the further polymer is present in the aqueous solution in an amount of from 0.1% to 10% by weight, wherein the further polymer is devoid of crosslinkable groups, and wherein the further polymer forms a clear aqueous solution with the prepolymer having crosslinkable groups. Therefore, Applicants submit that cited reference does not provide any motivation to a person skilled in the art to make necessary changes to its disclosure to arrive at the present invention, the claimed invention as currently claimed is patentable over the cited reference. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection.

Should the Examiner believe that a discussion with Applicants' representative would further the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned. Please address all correspondence to Thomas Hoxie, Novartis Corporation, Corporate Intellectual Property, One Health Plaza, Bldg. 430, East Hanover, NJ 07936-1080. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any other fees which may be required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 and 1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0134.

Respectfully submitted,



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